(d) and (e) Disciplinary action was initiated. During the Years 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96, 117, 210 and 185 officials, respectively were punished.

Running of Jabalpur-Bhopal Intercity Train

6400. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE: Will the Ministry of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware about the demands of members of Rail Consumers Advisory Committee Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh regarding the introduction of Jabalpur-Bhopal Intercity train, running of Jabalpur-Delhi Mahamaya train with full bogies and suitable timings of trains for passengers.

(b) is so, whether the Government propose to take any action in this regard; and

(c) if so, the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (c) Demands for introudction of a train between Jabalpur-Bhopal, running of Jabalpur-Nizamuddin Gondwana Express with full load and re-scheduling of Gondwana Express have been examined but have not been found feasible due to operational and resource constraints. Besides, Jabalpur-Nizamuddin Gondwana Express is running with full load between Bina and Nizamuddin.

[English]

New Mineral Exploration Policy

6401. SHRI K. PRADHANI: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce a new mineral exploration policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which this policy is likely to be announced?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) The policy prescription for exploration of minerals is covered under the National Mineral Policy, 1993. There is no proposal to introduce a separate new mineral exploration policy.

Forfeiture of Bank Guarantees

6402. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the privatisation of basic telephone services suffered a severe set back as the Communications Ministry revoked letters of Intent and also forfeiture of bank guarantees of Essar group of companies;

(b) if so, whether from out of 13 companies that have licence so far in the field of basic telephone are now in jeopardise;

(c) whether the Tara and DoT is already involved in litigation with the controversial Himachal Futuristic Co. Ltd.; and

(d) if so, steps the Government propose to take to revive their licences?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) As against 12 Letters of Intent (LOIs) issued to 8 companies for providing telephone service in 12 Telecom Circles, 2 companies viz. M/s Bharti Telenet and M/s Reliance Telecom., after payment of first year's lincence fee, have signed the Lincenes for Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat Circles respectively. 2 companies holding 3 LOIs have yet to complete formalities and deposit licence fee for conversion of their LOIs into Licenes. Remaining 4 companies holding 7 LOIs (including M/s Essar Group holding LOI for Punjab Circle) have filed Civil Suits in the High Court of Dehhi against Government's order for forfeiture of their Earnest Money Bank Guarantees due to their failure to comply with tender provisions. Their cases are sub-judice. Government, however, has made appropriate efforts to resolve a number of issues raised by them to facilitate successful implementation of these projects.

(c) M/s HFCL Bezeq Telecom Ltd., the LOI holding company for Delhi, Haryana, UP (West) and Orissa, has filed Civil Suit in the High Court of Delhi against the Government's action to invoke their Earnest Money Bank Guarantee due to their Non-compliance of tender provisions. Further, Government is not aware of any litigation between M/s Tata and M/s Himachal Futuristic Co. Ltd., the two private sector companies.

(d) The cases are sub-judice in the High Court of Delhi.

[Translation]

Loan to Educated Unemployed Youth for Starting Hotels

6403. DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR:

SHRI DEVI BOX SINGH:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government provide loans on concessional rates to educated unemployed youth of hilly region of Uttaranchal of Uttar Pradesh for starting hotels etc. at tourist spots;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the criteria being followed to identify the beneficiaries; and

(d) the number of such youth in the Tehri Garhwal and Uttarkashi districts provided loan under the said scheme during the last three years?